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SUBJECT: SULTAN EMBARKS ON ANNUAL MEET THE PEOPLE TOUR

11. (SBU) On October 12, while attempting to arrange meetings between the Ambassador and Minister of Transport and Communications, the Political Assistant learned that the Sultan, the Royal Court and several ministers had on that day embarked on the Sultan's annual Meet the People Tour. The Sultan's departure for the tour has since been publicly announced. The purpose of the tour is to allow local leaders and ordinary citizens to discuss their concerns with the Sultan. The tour begins this year at the Seeh al Makarim royal camp in the northern region of Batinah Coast and is expected to be at least a month long. After spending a week on Batinah, the Sultan is expected to travel to the royal camp in Musandam. Additional destinations are yet to be disclosed.

12. (SBU) News that the Sultan had left for the tour dispels rumors that the tour would be cancelled due to H1N1 concerns. It is possible that cancelling the tour had been discussed among government officials, but the leveling off of the H1N1 infection rate may have led to the tour proceeding as planned. The practical implications of the tour include the necessity of visitors seeking an audience with the Sultan to be transported to the royal camp. Notably, in the past, newly arrived ambassadors have travelled to the royal camp to present their credentials.
Schmierer